



Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

Voluntary Habitat Restoration on Private Lands in Alaska

Fairbanks Soil and Water Conservation District, Chena Slough Neighborhood Group, and the City of North Pole partnered with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to restore two miles of fish passage on Chena Slough in Interior Alaska by replacing an impassible culvert with a bridge. USFWS photos by Elaine Mayer.



What is the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program?

The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program works with private and other non-federal landowners to voluntarily restore fish and wildlife habitats on their land. The program emphasizes removal of barriers to fish passage, as well as restoration of riparian (streambank) and upland vegetation. Environmental education projects are also funded. Projects are designed to benefit fish and wildlife while meeting the needs and desires of private landowners.

Habitat Restoration Benefits Fish and Wildlife Resources

A national program, Partners for Fish and Wildlife was introduced to Alaska in 1995. Since then, more than 500 habitat restoration projects have been completed across the state.

Many projects have focused on restoration of wetlands, riparian areas, and streams. These restored habitats now provide important food, cover, and breeding and rearing areas for fish, mammals, waterfowl, shorebirds, songbirds, and birds of prey.

Other projects are restoring fish passage, replanting forests, and initiating watershed-scale conservation efforts.

Habitat Restoration Benefits Landowners and the Public

The Partners Program offers technical and financial assistance to landowners to protect or restore habitat on private, municipal or borough lands. Once a project is approved through a competitive process, the Fish and Wildlife Service pays up to 50 percent of project costs. Landowners may also receive assistance from a wide variety of other partners, including the Natural Resources Conservation Service, State natural resource agencies, Native groups, schools, businesses, and local watershed councils. The landowner's cost share may be in cash, or "in kind" contributions of materials, services, or labor.

As vital habitats on private lands are restored, trust and cooperative partnerships between private landowners and the Fish and Wildlife Service are strengthened. Across the nation, private landowners are the stewards of the vast majority of fish and wildlife habitats. The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program provides a win-win solution, because it protects and enhances fish and wildlife resources while maintaining or increasing private land values.



The Alaska Department of Fish and Game partnered with the Service to write, produce, and distribute three Public Service Announcements covering the topics of illegal fish transport and stocking, the impact of Northern Pike on salmon outside of their natural range, and the accidental transport of invasive species on inadequately cleaned waders. USFWS Photo by Mary Price.



Brush layering project on the Kenai River. This technique works well to quickly revegetate and stabilize banks while providing cover for juvenile fish. USFWS photo by Brie Darr.

Successful Alaskan Projects Take Many Forms

Restoration projects include, but are not limited to:

- Removal or replacement of structures blocking fish passage (bulkheads, perched or undersized culverts)
- Stream bank restoration and protection (revegetation, setbacks, light-penetrating walkways, exclusion of livestock from waterbodies)
- Restoration of natural water flow in wetlands
- Wildlife habitat restoration or enhancement (creation of nesting platforms or snags, browse improvement, prescribed burning)

More than 500 Restoration Projects Have Been Implemented State-wide!

The Partners Program is developing a watershed assessment for Juneau's Lemon Creek with the City of Juneau and ADF&G. This assessment will guide future development and flood abatement measures, and will identify restoration needs and opportunities in the watershed.

The Service has worked with private landowners and ADF&G in over 400 habitat restoration and protection projects on the Kenai Peninsula, restoring nearly 3 miles of riverbank using revegetation techniques, and protecting nearly 6 miles by installing spruce tree revetments and elevated light penetrating gratewalks to minimize boat and angler impacts.

Private home-owners, neighbors, a Native corporation, and NRCS partnered with the Fish and Wildlife Service to restore over 1,500 feet of Chena River shoreline in Interior Alaska, providing riparian habitat for fish and wildlife while protecting property values.

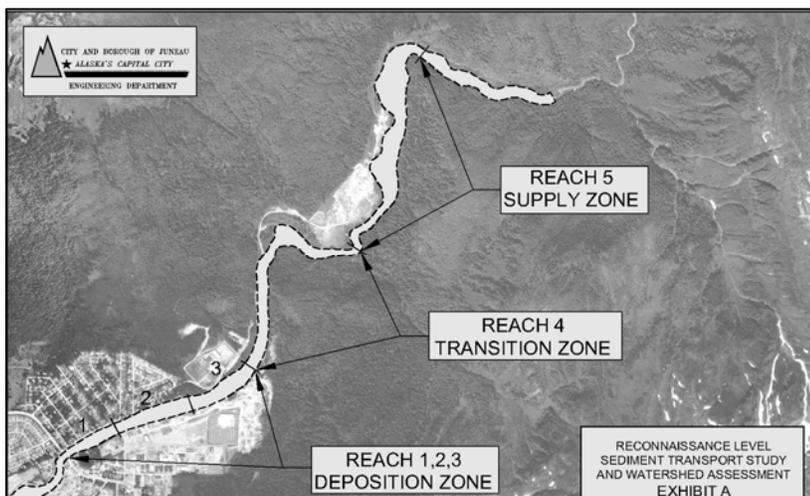
The Service is partnering with state and federal resource agencies, the Municipality of Anchorage, and the Anchorage Waterways Council to return the historic Ship Creek watershed to a more natural condition. Project components include streambank restoration, improved angler access, fish passage restoration, and public outreach.

- Fish habitat improvement (creation of off-channel rearing ponds, instream cover, or connections between wetlands)

Partners projects also benefit landowners by preventing erosion of river-front or lake-front property; improving water quality and watershed health; and enhancing recreational values.

The Program is Responsive, Stream-lined, and Flexible

Assistance offered by the Fish and Wildlife Service to private landowners ranges from informal advice on the design and location of potential restoration projects, to on-the-ground project construction. The Partners Program places a minimum paperwork burden on participating landowners. A voluntary cooperative agreement is developed with each participating landowner, and runs for a minimum of 10 years.



An important salmon stream, Lemon Creek in Juneau has been negatively impacted by urban development, gravel mining, and road construction. The Partners Program is cooperating on a watershed assessment to help guide the future development, restoration needs and opportunities, and flood abatement measures in the watershed.